

Service Area Plan

Department Of Conservation And Recreation

State Park Management and Operations (50404)

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

DCR's award winning State Park System provides a varied and robust assortment of natural, cultural, and recreational venues for the enjoyment, education, and use by Virginians and our visitors. The system encompasses thirty-four sites managed for public use and at least six additional sites are currently being acquired or developed.

Service Area Alignment to Mission

The Virginia State Parks System works with Virginians to conserve, protect, and enhance their lands and water and promotes the stewardship, conservation education, and enjoyment of natural, cultural and outdoor recreational resources.

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Service Area Statutory Authority

- The overarching authority may be found in Section 1 of Article XI of the Virginia Constitution that reads: "To the end that the people have clean air, pure water, and the use and enjoyment for recreation of adequate public lands, waters, and other natural resources, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, develop, and utilize its natural resources, its public lands, and its historical sites and buildings. Further, it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth."
- The director may convey, lease, or demise departmental lands, lease state-owned housing under the control of the department to state employees, grant easements to governmental agencies and public service corporations for renewable periods of not more than 10 years, sell trees, and authorize the removal of minerals from such lands under conditions prescribed by law. With the approval of the Governor, the director is authorized to enter into leases and contracts with an initial term of up to 30 years for the operation and development of revenue-producing capital improvement projects in Virginia state parks. The director of the department is responsible for managing historic sites and commemorative facilities. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 3.
- The director may request the Governor to commission individuals designated by the director to act as conservation officers of the Commonwealth. Commissioned conservation officers shall be law-enforcement officers and shall have power to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth and the regulations of the Department and the collegial bodies under administrative support of the Department. If requested by the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality, conservation officers shall coordinate the investigation of felonies with the local law-enforcement agency. The Department's Conservation officers shall also have the power to arrest without warrant in certain cases as authorized pursuant to § 19.2-81. Conservation officers shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth on all Department lands and waters and upon lands and waters under the management or control of the Department; on property of the United States government or a department or agency thereof on which the Commonwealth has concurrent jurisdiction and is contiguous with land of the Department or on which the Department has a management interest; on a property of another state agency or department whose property is contiguous with land of the Department; and in those local jurisdictions in which mutual aid agreements have been established pursuant to § 15.2-1736. Special conservation officers appointed pursuant to § 10.1-115 shall have jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth. Upon separation from the Department, incapacity, death, or other good cause, the Director may recommend in writing the decommissioning of any conservation officer to the Governor. The Director may designate certain conservation officers to be special conservation officers. Special conservation officers shall have the same authority and power as sheriffs throughout the Commonwealth to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 4.
- The department is responsible for acquiring, developing, improving, managing, licensing, and regulating the use of state parks and for undertaking a master planning process for all existing state parks, following the substantial acquisition of land for a new state park, and prior to undertaking substantial improvements to state parks. The department is authorized to acquire properties or interests therein of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historical interest, biological significance or any other unusual features that should be acquired, preserved and maintained for the use, observation, education, health and pleasure of the people of Virginia. Further, the department is authorized to permit and otherwise regulate activities on those portions of the Appalachian Trail under its control. The department is instructed to establish a Golden Passport card that authorizes persons receiving social security disability payments to enter Virginia's state parks without having to pay an admittance or parking fee. The department also is charged to establish, maintain, protect and regulate a statewide system of trails. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 1.
- The department is authorized to establish and maintain a comprehensive plan for the development of

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public outdoor recreational facilities; to establish standards for such facilities; to disburse funds to local, regional, and other state agencies for acquiring and developing such facilities; and to make regulations to carry out the statute. It may develop recreational programs and assist state institutions, agencies, and political subdivisions in developing such programs. The department is authorized to acquire property or interests therein to maintain the character of the land as open-space land. Such land is to be made available for agricultural and timbering uses that are compatible in maintaining the open-space nature of the property. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 2.

- The director is authorized, subject to the provisions of the chapter, to issue revenue bonds of the Commonwealth to pay the cost of acquiring, constructing, enlarging, improving, and maintaining camping and recreational facilities in any of the state parks and to establish and collect fees and charges for the use of such facilities. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 3.
- The Board of Conservation and Recreation provides recommendations to the director on grants and loans pertaining to outdoor recreation, on the designation of recreational sites eligible for recreational access road funds, on master plans and substantial acquisition or improvement amendments to master plans, and on designations for scenic rivers, scenic highways, and Virginia Byways. The Board is authorized to conduct fund-raising activities as deemed appropriate and will deposit such revenue into the State Parks Projects Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 1, Article 2.
- The Board may provide advice to the director on expenditures from the State Park Projects Fund. Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 2, Article 1.
- The governing bodies of localities, and state-supported institutions of higher learning having a police force, as well as sheriffs with law-enforcement authority within localities without a police force, and the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation with commissioned conservation officers, or any combination thereof may, by proper resolutions, enter in and become a party to contracts or mutual aid agreements for the use of their joint police or other law-enforcement forces, both regular and auxiliary, their equipment and materials to maintain peace and good order. Any police or other law-enforcement officer, regular or auxiliary, while performing his duty under any such contract or agreement, shall have the same authority in such locality as he has within the locality where he was appointed. In counties where no police department has been established, the sheriff may, in his discretion, enter into mutual aid agreements as provided by this section. Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Chapter 17. Article 3, § 15.2-1736
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- DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (4 VAC 5)
§ 4 VAC 5-30. Virginia State Parks Regulations, 1975, eff. Jan. 15, 1976; amended May 1, 1977, Jan. 18, 1981, June 24, 1982, May 4, 1983, and Feb. 12, 2003.
§ 4 VAC 5-36. Standard fees for Use of Department of Conservation and Recreation Facilities, Programs and Services, eff. Apr. 25, 2002; amended Mar. 27, 2003, May 21, 2003, April 7, 2004 and February 8, 2006.
§ 4 VAC 5-40. Virginia State Forest Regulations, adopted Oct. 14, 1970.
- BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (4 VAC 3)
§ 4 VAC 3-10. Regulatory Public Participation Procedures, eff. Dec. 30, 1992; amended July 13, 1994 and September 10, 2003.
- Commonwealth of Virginia Parks and Natural Area Bond Act of 2002; Chapters 854 [SB672] and 884 [HB1144] of the 2002 Virginia Acts of Assembly
- Capital Projects; Virginia Public Building Authority and Virginia College Building Authority; Chapters 855 [SB673] and 887 [HB1284] of the 2002 Virginia Acts of Assembly

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Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
Agricultural Community	12	20
Boards and Foundations	2	2
Businesses	1,010	1,520
Conservation Organizations and Land Trusts	50	100
Educational Institutions/educators/students/researchers	5,000	10,000
Government Agencies (Federal, State, and Local)	200	350
Landowners	500	600
Recreational Users (campers, picnickers, hikers, etc.)	7,000,000	10,500,000
Scouting and Youth Groups	100	200
Soil and Water Conservation Districts	25	47
Special Customer Groups	300	500
Volunteers and Volunteer Groups	2,500	10,000

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Service Area Partners

Agricultural Community

Service Area Partners

Boards and Foundations

Service Area Partners

Chesapeake Bay Program (Includes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia)

Service Area Partners

Contractual Services

Service Area Partners

Educational Institutions

Virginia Colleges and Universities; Out of State Colleges and Universities

Service Area Partners

Engineers and Consultants

Service Area Partners

Federal Agencies

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration; Natural Resources Conservation Service; National Park Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Forest Service; Federal Volunteerism Programs

Service Area Partners

Local Governments

Departments of Parks and Recreation

Service Area Partners

Non-profits

Fraternal and Civic Organizations

Service Area Partners

Regional Planning District Commissions

Service Area Partners

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Service Area Partners

Stakeholder Organizations

Friends of State Park Groups; Park and Recreational Professional Organizations; Private Campground Association; Recreational Advocacy Groups; Virginia Recreation and Parks Society, Recreational User Clubs and Associations (Good Sam Club, Airstream Club, College Outing Clubs, etc.)

Service Area Partners

State Agencies

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Virginia Department of Corrections; Virginia Department of Education; Virginia Department of General Services; Virginia Department of Historic Resources; Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy; Virginia Department of Social Services; Virginia Council on Indians and Individual Indian Tribes; Virginia Department of Environmental Quality;

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Virginia Department of Forestry; Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Virginia Department of Health; Virginia Department of Rails and Public Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation; Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Virginia Marine Resources Commission; Virginia Museum of Natural History; Virginia Court System; Virginia Cooperative Extension

Service Area Partners

Tourism

Statewide Media; Virginia Association of Broadcasters

Service Area Partners

Vendors

Hospitality Industry, Canoe Outfitters, Fishing Guides, Horse Riding Outfitters, Caterers

Service Area Products and Services

- Outdoor Recreational Activities
- Public Education
- Public Information
- Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement
- Public Safety (dam safety, law enforcement, etc.)
- Park Facilities (cabins, campsites, picnic shelters, visitor centers, meeting facilities, training facilities, museums etc.)
- Park Programs (Festivals, concerts, plays, performances, re-enactments, living histories, interpretive programs)
- Merchandise sales, gift shops, restaurants and food concessions
- Resource Management and protection

Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services

- state funding levels
- insufficient staffing levels in key program areas
- increased cost of construction materials, services, and land
- facility and equipment conditions
- increased demand for agency services/products

Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services

- More cabins and campgrounds, new parks, increased attendance and visitation, new facilities, and higher customer expectations, will all result in an increased demand for the year round provision of products and services.

Service Area Human Resources Summary

Service Area Human Resources Overview

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Service Area Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary

Effective Date:

Total Authorized Position level

Vacant Positions

 Non-Classified (Filled).....

 Full-Time Classified (Filled)

 Part-Time Classified (Filled)

 Faculty (Filled)

Wage

Contract Employees

Total Human Resource Level

Factors Impacting Service Area Human Resources

Anticipated Changes in Service Area Human Resources

Service Area Financial Summary

Included in the General Fund appropriation is \$650,000 for dam repairs and \$4.5 M that was provided during the 2005 Session for operating, safety, and staffing needs for state parks. Funded with general funds and visitor user fees, studies have proven that we are the most frugally supported state park system in the nation, and estimates are that we remain \$10 million and 85 positions short of critically needed funding as established by a department wide study. Park revenues are reinvested into our operations.

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$19,966,982	\$10,493,455	\$19,966,982	\$10,493,455
Changes To Base	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SERVICE AREA TOTAL	\$19,966,982	\$10,493,455	\$19,966,982	\$10,493,455

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Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

Objective 50404.01

Provide outstanding state park facilities, services and programs while protecting and promoting stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the Commonwealth. (Key)

Virginia's award-winning State Park System provides the natural resources, facilities, services, and programs for visitors to enjoy outdoor recreational opportunities, promote a conservation ethic, and appreciate our natural and cultural heritage resources.

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Meet growing demands on Virginia's award-winning State Parks, while maintaining Virginia's traditional conservation orientation.
- Improve the quality of Virginia's waters and the Chesapeake Bay through non-point source pollution reduction programs and sound land use management.
- Enhance opportunities to participate in natural resource-based recreation opportunities.
- Advance the protection, conservation, and stewardship of Virginia's significant natural areas, conservation lands, and natural heritage resources.

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 50404.01.01**

We will continue to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction with state park services as demonstrate

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: 87.3%

Measure Target: Maintain more than 85% annually.

Measure Source and Calculation:

Responses to DCR's Virginia State Parks "Your Comments Count Survey" are collected and information tabulated. The survey solicits several types of information from park visitors. One section asks guests to list priorities for improvements for the park they visited, a second section asks guests to rate their overall perceptions of the park and its services within a provided list of seven areas, and a third section asks them to rate specific facilities and services. All rated categories are scored on a descriptive scale as follows: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Unacceptable. A final section gathers visitor information such as activities during the visit, number of visits per year, numbers of adults and children in the party, etc. Surveys may be returned to collection boxes at the park (in which case the park forwards them to the Central Office) or mailed directly to the Central Office. The surveys are counted and individual responses are sent to each submittal. The completed forms are forwarded to Radford University for analysis and the results are then forwarded to the Division of State Parks within 30 days of the end of the quarter. The Division of State Parks will review the analysis and report on results to the DCR Director's Office within 40 days of the end of each quarter.

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- **Measure 50404.01.02**

We will increase the number of overnight visits to state parks. (Key)

Measure Type: Outcome **Measure Frequency:** Annually

Measure Baseline: 139,000 based on an average of the past 3 fiscal years.

Measure Target: An increase of 7,300 (5%) overnight visits.

Measure Source and Calculation:

The majority of overnight facility rentals are made within the agency's central reservation system, but additional sales are also made at the park level. The calculation for this measure is made by taking reports from the central reservation center that give the total nights of rental made for camping, cabins, and lodges and to this number adding the rental nights made at the park level as shown in the agency's point-of-sales system. The latter system provides a report called "Sales by Product Category and Class" that can be taken (separately) for cabins and camping. The number of sales recorded in this report is modified by subtracting the number of non-rental night sales, such as pet fees and extra bed rentals, that are shown on the report summary.

- **Measure 50404.01.03**

Number of park day users.

Measure Type: Outcome **Measure Frequency:** Annually

Measure Baseline: For FY05, total day use parking was 344,000

Measure Target: The FY07 target will be an increase of 11,000 park day users

Measure Source and Calculation:

The data is currently collected in the Agency's point of sale system which tracks all sales at field locations. The calculation will be made for the fiscal year by running the report "Print Sales Analysis by Product Sales" and totaling all parking category sales counts (not dollars) including recorded uses of annual/lifetime passes, but not including initial sales of annual passes, recorded counts for employees and service vehicles, and surcharges added to the basic parking fee such as trailer fees.

Objective 50404.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- Ensure public satisfaction with state park facilities, services, and programs.
- Provide and improve multi-faceted public awareness information using the website, media, marketing and promotions.
- Address maintenance needs at state parks.
- Provide effective staff training including but not limited to Basic Ranger Training Academy, Program Support Training, FOCUS customer service training, OSHA training, Law Enforcement Training, Interpretive training, etc.
- Maintain existing and develop additional public and private partnerships to further programs and operations.
- Provide a quality Youth Program to complete natural resource projects, encourage teambuilding and citizenship, foster environmental and cultural stewardship and increase awareness of natural resource careers.
- Provide and expand interpretive and educational programs offerings.
- Foster the development of support groups and continue to use and increase volunteerism.

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- Provide and improve merchandise and food services program.
- Continually refine and implement resource management plans and maintain current master plans for parks.